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THE WAR.

TO-DAY'S TELEGRAMS.

(Reuter's Service to the China Mail.)

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR GREETINGS.

FROM H.M. THE KING.

The following messages have been received by Major-General Vantiri, Commanding the troops in China, from His Majesty the King:—

No. 1.

"I send to all ranks of the Navy and Army my hearty good wishes for Christmas and the New Year. I realize your hardships, patiently and cheerfully borne, and rejoice in the successes you have won so nobly.

The nation stands faithful to its pledges, resolute to fulfil them. May God bless your efforts and give us victory." Signed GEORGE R.I.

No. 2.

"Our Christmas thoughts are with the sick and wounded sailors and soldiers. We know by personal experience with what patience and cheerfulness their suffering is borne. We wish all a speedy restoration to health, a restful Christmas, and brighter days to come." Signed GEORGE R.I. and MARY R.

SIR DOUGLAS HAIG TO HIS TROOPS.

LONDON, Dec. 25.

Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig in a special Order to the Armies in France, says:—

"Our victories and successes have been very considerable. They might well have led to an early and complete victory, but for the Russian collapse. It behoves us to harden our hearts and steel ourselves for further effort. I have every confidence that the same courage and determination as in the past will be forthcoming to meet the further demands for the safety of our hearths and homes in the coming year.

AMERICAN WEEKLY WAR REVIEW.

THE ENEMY'S INTENSIVE PEACE PROPAGANDA.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24.

Mr. Baker, the Secretary for War, in his weekly review of the war says: "No matter what superiority in men and guns the enemy may temporarily be able to bring to the West, and even admitting an eventual modification of the Allied line in its favour, nevertheless, he knows, as far as it is humanly possible to foresee, his effort will inevitably result in merely local successes.

It would appear that, as a forerunner of the heralded German offensive in the West, an intensive peace propaganda is to be initiated. A careful examination of the situation reveals that the enemy is again preparing to sue for peace before the Allies are victorious. The Germans would have the world believe that the military situation is such that they will be able to dictate peace terms; they therefore, threaten that unless this dictated peace is accepted the German forces on the West Front will break through the Allied line. The various reports of immediate German peace proposals, on seemingly favourable terms, should not induce us to slacken our war preparations.

THE ITALIAN FRONT.

ENEMY ATTACK STOPPED.

LONDON, Dec. 24.

An Italian official message states:—The enemy, yesterday morning, at the Buso-Valbella sector, broke in our defences. We stopped him at the rear positions and our counter-attacks are progressing satisfactorily.

We drove the enemy to the left bank of the Fiave Vecchia, to the south of Gradengo.

A BRILLIANT RAID IN A SNOW-STORM.

LONDON, Dec. 24.

An Italian semi-official message states that the Italian Brigade, known as the Yellow Riflemen, or Calvarie, carried out a brilliant raid during a snow-storm, yesterday evening.

The Yellowmen, who lay in ambush, followed up a violent burst of artillery, rushed and killed the enemy sentries, swept past the entanglements and compelled the terrified defenders of the position to surrender.

The attackers returned with much booty and many prisoners.

GERMAN REPORT.

LONDON, Dec. 25.

A German official report says:—On the 24th inst. between Asiago and the Brenta we stormed the Col-del-Rosso and the heights adjoining westward and eastward and took 6,000 prisoners.

ITALY AND THE STATUS QUO.

ROME, Dec. 15.

The Chamber passed a vote of confidence in the Government, by 345 votes to 50, after a speech by Signor Orlando who, referring to the advocacy of peace by Socialist Deputies on a basis of the status quo, pointed out that Germany had never spoken of such a peace and had never mentioned the restoration of Belgium, nor had Austria ever shown any intention of restoring unredeemed Italy. Rather than accept a peace which would leave Austria in possession of Italian territory, the Italians would retreat fighting as far as Sicily; moreover, the return to the status quo would be impossible after the immense sacrifices of the war. The only way to safety was by resistance—loud and prolonged cheers.

THE ITALIAN NATION'S SOLIDARITY.

ROME, December 24.

The big Government majority in the Chamber is generally considered an overwhelming proof of the nation's solidarity to make any sacrifice necessary to pursue the war with increased vigour, and as a complete overthrow of the Interventionist movement.

THE YORWAERTS RESUMES PUBLICATION.

AMSTERDAM, Dec. 24.

The *Voorwaerd* has resumed publication and gives prominence to the Food Controller's defence which, amongst other things, admits that illicit trade has assumed such proportions as to endanger the general food supply. Commenting on the speech of Mr. Lloyd George, the paper says they are unable to combat militarism, but after the war the military current which in peace time had forced militarism on the defensive, would become overruling.

THE WESTERN FRONT.

RAIDS REPULSED.

LONDON, Dec. 24.

Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig reports:—We drove off attempted raids to the south-east of Ephehy, in the neighbourhood of Monchy-le-Fraux and to the west of La Bassee.

MUCH AEROPLANE WORK.

LONDON, Dec. 24.

Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig reports:—The enemy, early this morning, raided an outpost to the east of Ephehy and took a few prisoners. A few other raiders, in the neighbourhood of the Menin Road, were driven off.

Our aeroplanes, on Saturday, bombed a big gun near Lille and also hutments, billets and trenches. They machine-gunned the infantry in the trenches and many thousands of rounds were fired.

Four German machines were brought down. The aeroplanes of the enemy's night flying squadrons and also important railway stations were bombed during the night and several pilots made two flights. At one aerodrome, many hits were obtained on the sheds.

CHRISTMAS DAY REPORT.

LONDON, Dec. 25.

Sir Douglas Haig to-day reports:—We have taken a few prisoners in patrol encounters southward of Cambrai. There is mutual artillery activity westward of La Bassee and eastward of Ypres.

Sir Douglas Haig reports:—Yesterday we drove off raiders south-eastward of Ypres.

There was hostile artillery at Ephehy and southward of Poelcapelle. There is vigorous bombing and air-fighting. Despite the haze, enemy artillery machines were active.

We brought down five in air-fighting and two others by gunfire. One of the latter was a large twin-engine machine. Three of the occupants were taken prisoner.

Our night fliers bombed several aerodromes with good effect. One of our squadrons at daylight dropped a ton of bombs on Mannheim. Bursts were observed on the main station works, and fires in the town. Enemy scouts repeatedly but unsuccessfully attacked. Heavy anti-aircraft fire forced down one of our machines. The others returned.

NAVAL AIRCRAFT ACTIVITY.

LONDON, Dec. 24.

The Admiralty announces that naval aircraft yesterday dropped six tons of bombs on St. Denis Western and on Marjankere, and Oostacker aerodromes. Good shooting was made.

All the machines returned.

DUNKIRK BOMBED.

LONDON, Dec. 24.

A French communiqué states:—There was reciprocal artillery on the right of the Meuse, in the Mort Homme region. Enemy aeroplanes, yesterday evening, dropped 40 bombs on Dunkirk. One civilian was killed and three wounded.

FRENCH AERIAL ACTIVITY.

LONDON, Dec. 24.

A French communiqué states:—From December 21 to December 23 there were 100 air fights, mostly over the enemy's lines. Eighteen enemy aeroplanes were brought down and ten were set on fire or destroyed by crash. We dropped 18,000 kilograms of bombs on railway stations, munition works, communications, and military buildings.

RUSSIA.

THE RUSSO-GERMAN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

NEGOTIATIONS OPENED.

AMSTERDAM, Dec. 23.

The peace negotiations have opened at Brest-Litovsk.

Germany has five delegates, headed by Dr. von Kuehlmann; Austria eight, headed by Count Czernin; Bulgaria five, headed by M. Popoff; the Minister of Justice; Turkey four, headed by Nessim Bey, the Foreign Minister, and Russia thirteen, headed by M. Kienoff.

Dr. von Kuehlmann, presiding, emphasised that there could be no question of drawing up an elaborate peace treaty, but only the settling of the most important conditions for the speedy re-establishment of peaceful intercourse, especially cultural and economic. He also emphasised that the negotiations must take into account what had become historical.

THE RUSSIAN PEACE TERMS.

PETROGRAD, Dec. 24.

The Russian Delegates have presented six points to the Brest-Litovsk Conference, including no forcible acquisition of territory; the restoration of political independence to the peoples who have lost it during the war; self-determination by national groups; no indemnities; private persons to be compensated for all losses from a special fund, to which all the belligerents shall contribute, on a proportional basis, and the same principles shall be applicable to colonies as to their parent countries.

The last clause prohibits an economic boycott, separate customs agreements, and a naval blockade not pursuing any direct military object.

AMSTERDAM, Dec. 24.

The enemy delegations at Brest-Litovsk have unanimously agreed upon the basis of a reply to the Russian peace proposals.

The reply will be formulated to-morrow.

EVACUATION OF OCCUPIED TERRITORIES DEMANDED.

PETROGRAD, Dec. 25.

It transpires that the Maximalist peace conditions include a demand for the speedy evacuation of the occupied territories.

MANUFACTURE OF ARMS PROHIBITED.

PETROGRAD, Dec. 25.

The Maximalists have prohibited the manufacture of arms in view of the probability of a speedy European peace.

THE CIVIL WAR.

PETROGRAD, Dec. 24.

The Maximalist News-Agency reports that the Bolsheviks are attacking Kharkoff and claims that the Bolsheviks now control the railways, to the south.

A telegram from Hovet reports that a large body of Cossack railwaymen, near Tsaritsin, have stopped the Bolshevik troops going to the north.

RED GUARDS SENT AGAINST UKRAINE.

PETROGRAD, Dec. 24.

Six thousand Red Guards from Petrograd and Moscow are being sent against Ukraine.

A CAUCASIAN ARMY TO ATTACK GENERAL KALEDIN.

PETROGRAD, Dec. 24.

A telegram from the Mikhalof Press Bureau states that a Caucasian army, 100,000 strong, is marching on General Kaledin's army.

A GENERAL MOBILISATION IN UKRAINE.

A general Ukrainian mobilisation has been ordered and the Don Cossack Government has agreed to place the Cossacks at the disposal of the Rada, in the event of an attack, and also to provide supplies.

Fighting is proceeding between the Ukrainians and the Maximalists, 80 miles from Khurkoff, and it is reported that there are 700 casualties.

ARREST OF AMERICAN RED CROSS AGENT.

NEW YORK, Dec. 24.

A telegram from Petrograd states that M. Troitzky has announced that Colonel Kolpashnikoff, the Petrograd agent of the American Red Cross Mission in Rumania, has been arrested in connection with the automobile affair.

The American Ambassador states that the Embassy and the Red Cross organisation were in no way involved in any counter-revolutionary movement.

A THREATENED SOCIAL CATASTROPHE.

PETROGRAD, Dec. 24.

The Times Petrograd Correspondent points out that the endeavours of the Bolsheviks to come to terms with Ukraine, and their modified attitude to the Constituent Assembly, indicate that the Bolsheviks are realising their danger. All southern Russia is now anti-Bolshevik.

The food supply threatens to become shorter and the coal supply from the Don is cut off, while peace is still remote. The war of classes threatens not only to result in a social catastrophe, but in the eventual subjection of Russia to German Imperialism.

A SPLIT IN THE PEASANTS' CONGRESS.

LONDON, Dec. 24.

Reuter's Correspondent at Petrograd states that a split has occurred in the Peasants' Congress, between the Left and the combined Right and Centre.

The latter has formed its own Executive with the watchword of "Power to the Constituent Assembly," and the former is negotiating with the Maximalists with a view to the formation of a Coalition Government.

THE GERMAN AND RUSSIAN SOCIALISTS.

PETROGRAD, Dec. 25.

The Maximalist News Agency states that the Maximalist Delegation at Brest-Litovsk has written to the German Foreign Office stating that the peace negotiations will be endangered if the German Ministry of Socialists are not allowed to go to Stockholm to meet the Russian Socialists.

A COALITION GOVERNMENT DECIDED UPON.

PETROGRAD, Dec. 25.

The Maximalists and the Social Revolutionaries of the Left have agreed to form a Coalition Government in which the latter will have seven seats.

REPORTED MOVEMENT OF TROOPS BY GERMANY.

PETROGRAD, Dec. 24.

It is reported that the Austrians and Germans are moving troops from the Russian Northern and Western Fronts to the South-Western and Rumanian Fronts.

DEFEAT OF GENERAL KORNILOFF'S TROOPS CLAIMED.

PETROGRAD, Dec. 25.

The Maximalists claim that 6,000 of General Korniloff's troops have been completely beaten in the Government of Kharkoff.

ANOTHER RUSSIAN GENERAL LYNCHED.

PETROGRAD, Dec. 24.

M. Tashkev, in a message, describes the horrible lynching of General Korovitchenko, by a mob. M. Kerensky had appointed General Korovitchenko to command the troops in Turkestan.

THE BRITISH ADVANCE IN PALESTINE.

LONDON, Dec. 24.

An official report from Palestine says:—

Our troops on the extreme left, with Naval co-operation on Saturday continued their advance northward of Nahr-el-Auja, reaching the line Sheikh-el-Ballutab—El Jali, four miles northward of the river, and occupied Fejja and Mulebbis, southward of the river, also Ranties, Khelbeide, and Khelbirch.

Two and a half tons of bombs were dropped on the retreating enemy, causing many casualties, and also on rolling stock and transport. Machine-guns fired 6,000 rounds on the enemy's column at short range.

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE BY THE POPE.

ROME, Dec. 25.

In a Christmas message to Cardinal Vannutelli, the Pope states that it is to be regretted that his efforts for a reconciliation have been in vain; nevertheless he would continue his mission of peace throughout the world, despite all obstacles. The present calamity would never finish until men and society return to God. In these days we may go in the footsteps of Christ to Jerusalem. Human counsels and divine designs have advanced together, the former subjugating the countries, the latter granting these long prayers of our fathers for giving back to Christianity the sacred places where the blood of the Redeemer was poured out.

Jerusalem, the sacred city for the blessed vision of peace, lifts to God a hymn of exultation, gratitude and love. All must see that the events that have just been accomplished in Jerusalem have a special language which strengthens the invitation we address to the people to return to God, because in Jerusalem were blessed, not those who came in the name of arms, but in the name of the Lord.

INDIAN MOSLEMS AND TURKEY.

SUGGESTION TO URGE PEACE ON TURKEY.

BOMBAY, Dec. 24.

The Times of India has received a letter from an Indian statesman of high position pointing out that the heart of the Moslems of India is grieved to find the principal Islamic State warring against the British Empire, and suggesting that the Moslems of India should jointly urge on Turkey the desirability of peace.

THE EXPLOSION AT KRUPPS.

AMSTERDAM, Dec. 24.

The *Handelsblad* states that the explosion at Krupp's factory occurred in a building in which there were 2,000 workers. The wooden portion of the building was entirely burned down. There were no fatalities but work in this section is entirely stopped.

MR. ASQUITH'S SON INJURED.

LONDON, Dec. 24.

Brigadier Arthur Asquith, a son of the ex-Premier, has been severely wounded in France.

A CONFERENCE AT PARIS.

PARIS, Dec. 24.

Lord Milner and Lord Balfour have arrived and have held a conference with M. Clemenceau, M. Poincaré, and General Foch.

KAISER VISITS THE VERDUN FRONT.

AMSTERDAM, Dec. 24.

The Kaiser visited the Verdun Front, on December 21.

Eulogising the troops on the Western Front, the Kaiser said their sacrifices had enabled their comrades on the Dvina and Isonzo Fronts to achieve successive victories, and added that a new foundation for the conduct of the war had been created.

AUSTRALIA AND CONSCRIPTION.

MELBOURNE, Dec. 23.

The Referendum figures are now:—Against Conscription 993,000 For 820,000

It is believed that the majority is largely due to the solid vote of the Labour Unions smarting under the recent strike defeat, and also to the campaign by Archbishop Mannix in favouring the Catholics, and it is further said that the industrial classes have failed to appreciate the larger issues involved.

Reuter is informed that all the anti-conscription leaders have expressed strong views against the war.

Labour leaders are fighting at the Front and others have sons there, including Mr. Tudor, the Anti-Conscription leader. There is no question of war-weariness or Pacifism, but merely a clash of opinion with regard to the numbers which can be spared from agriculture and other industries essential to winning the war. The Commonwealth of Australia is maintaining larger forces in the field than all the other Dominions put together. Her Navy—the only Dominion Navy within the Empire—has been serving since the war broke out. Australia has paid all her own war expenses. All political parties unanimously support the continuance of the war till victory is secured; they also support the retention of the German Pacific Colonies and no slackening of war effort.

ANOTHER PLOT IN ARGENTINA.

BUENOS AIRES, Dec. 24.

A plot has been discovered in which German agents have been directed regardless of cost, to destroy all allied shipping in Argentine ports.

The order is attributed to the success of negotiations for purchasing the surplus of the harvest. Shipping agents are adopting precautions.

THE CAILLAUX CONSPIRACY CASE.

PARIS, Dec. 24.

General Dubail has signed the order for the hearing of the charges against M. Caillaux, M. Loustalot and M. Comby.

M. Caillaux will be defended by Maître Demange, one of the defenders of Major Dreyfus.

M. Comby is an ex-barrister and is alleged to have accompanied M. Loustalot to Switzerland to see the ex-Khedive, and to have been present at interviews between M. Loustalot and Signor Cavallini, the Italian ex-member of Parliament, who is now under arrest in Rome.

GENERAL SARRAIL'S SUCCESSOR.

PARIS, Dec. 24.

General Guillaumat, the successor to General Sarrail, has arrived at Salonika.

General Guillaumat was formerly Commander of the Army at Verdun and is regarded as a brilliant soldier.

TRINIDAD'S RAILWAY.

TRINIDAD, Dec. 24.

Trinidad's Railway, the first of the West Indies, has been opened.